

P.O. Box 1021
Evanston, IL.
60204

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



GENERAL CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

April 26-May 5

I plan to be with AFFIRMATION at General Conference from

_____ to _____.

I would like a room by myself _____

I would like to share with another person _____

I would like to share with two other people _____

I would like to share with three other persons _____

I prefer smoking _____ Non smoking _____

I would like to room with _____

COVENANT GROUP INFORMATION

I would like to be in a Covenant Group _____

I will/will not be at General Conference _____

I would like to be in a Covenant group with _____

Registration should be sent to AFFIRMATION, P.O. Box 1021,
Evanston, IL. 60204.

Please return as soon as possible.

MOVING?

BE SURE TO TAKE US WITH YOU!!!!!!

Affix old mailing label here

Affirmation ☐

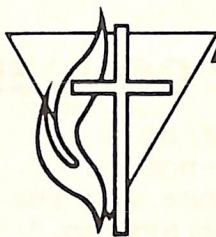
Open Hands ☐

Name _____

Address _____

Mail to: Affirmation
P.O. Box 1021
Evanston, IL 60204





AFFIRMATION NEWSLETTER

UNITED METHODISTS

FOR LESBIAN AND GAY CONCERNS

WINTER 1988

AFFIRMATION SPRING MEETING

The program for the AFFIRMATION Spring meeting is being planned by Joesph and Randy. We will deal with 'Confronting Our Racism'. Hopefully it will be a meeting that pushes us, touches us, helps us look at who we are, ask questions and even find some answers.

Upon arrival check in at Hotel for the time of Friday night's meeting. We will be meeting at the hotel.

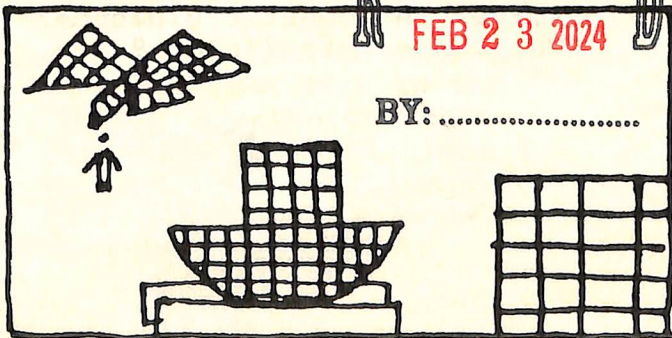
Hope to see you in St. Louis. Contacts in St. Louis are Steve Dunn [REDACTED] Lafayette UMC [REDACTED]

National AFFIRMATION is planning a retreat day for all interested AFFIRMATION members and friends- to take place on Monday, April 25, between the National AFFIRMATION meeting and the first day of General Conference. The theme for the day is "Building A Support Network: A Model For Living". We will meet at a retreat center near St. Louis for the day. The cost will be approximately \$6-8 per person, which will include lunch, snacks and program materials.

The program will include time for personal sharing, music, meditation, formation of covenant groups and recreation. The planned activities will us to connect with ourselves, each other, nature and God; to find in all of these connections a source of strength that will enable us to do the work of AFFIRMATION at General Conference and will empower us in our daily lives.
(Look for "sign-up" elsewhere in this newsletter)

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BY:



COVENANT GROUPS

National AFFIRMATION members and friends are invited to participate in covenant groups for the duration of General Conference. The covenant groups (modeled on non-violence affinity groups) were an important part of AFFIRMATION's presence at the 1984 General Conference. Each group will consist of 6-8 people. One or two in each group could be people not present at General Conference who would be willing to commit to being available by phone for support during the 10 days of Conference. The makeup of these groups will be varied but integral to each will be a certain level of trust and commonality. The covenant groups will exist as small communities throughout General Conference. Each group will decide when and how often to meet, making a commitment to regular support of group members.

At our Retreat Day (see related article) prior to General Conference the covenant groups will have time to share, develop trust and think through the kinds of situations which may arise in which group members may need the support of each other. Participation in a covenant group is greatly encouraged for those attending General Conference. If you have questions call Judy Cayot at [REDACTED] (Look for signup elsewhere in this newsletter)

HOLLY NEAR CONCERT

As a kick-off of a national conference on "Domestic Violence and the Criminal Justice System," sponsored in part by the United Methodist Church, Holly Near will be giving a concert on the Sunday evening in the middle of General Conference. Location is the Adams Mark Hotel Ballroom and is within walking distance or easy public transportation from the downtown hotels and convention center. (Sunday evening at General Conference is the "Area Night"-traditionally a time for the host area to put on some kind of entertainment. This is a chance to pick your own.)

Tickets can be ordered from Donna K. Campbell (a UM Church and Community worker!) [REDACTED] Warsaw, MO [REDACTED] Make your checks payable to "Women's Self-Help Center." Tickets are \$15, with proceeds going to establish a legal assistance fund for women involved in domestic violence. The concert is 7 p.m.-9 p.m.



AFFIRMATION

PRESS STATEMENT

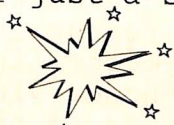
I'd like to talk about two ways that AFFIRMATION will be at the 1988 General Conference.

The first way has to do with some specifics:

- We will have a dinner, celebrating justice-seeking women, women who have made significant and often unrecognized contributions within the United Methodist Church.

- We will offer a worship service organized jointly with AFFIRMATION and members of Reconciling Congregations.

- We will have an office, from which we will publish a daily newsletter. We will host a hospitality room for people with questions, concerns and/or looking for support or just a safe place to be.



- We support all legislation which seeks to remove prohibitions on lesbian and gay relationships with the UMC, including but not limited to legislation relating to the social principles, funding and ordination.

- We support the General Boards of Discipleship, Global Ministries and Church and Society in their statements, legislation and work with AIDS Ministries.

- Also we plan to release some statistics related to the Reconciling Congregation Program. The RCP is a program in which local congregations

study, question, discuss and decide if they will become an intentionally inclusive congregation. It is a program that we see as a possible model for evangelism. One statistic is that RC's have received 2½ times as many new members as comparable congregations not in the Reconciling Congregation Program.

The second way AFFIRMATION will be at General Conference has to do with attitudes and hearts:

- What AFFIRMATION really plans to do is follow Jesus' mandate-to love God and love each other.

- Too many of us have learned to live with poverty, racism, sexism-with ignorance and hate. We have not learned to live with love. We need to say no to hate and open the doors to love.

- Gay men and lesbians have another model to offer. In the midst of our loss, of jobs, of family, of life, we are learning to live with love, love of ourselves, each other and of our church. And we live with the love of God. Love cannot ever be recognized as a sin or perversion. Love is not incompatible with Christian teaching. Love is Christian teaching.

At the 1988 General Conference we plan to continue to be a vital part of the church and we continue to do our best to live with love.

—Mary Gaddis



HOUSING INFORMATION

For both the AFFIRMATION semi-annual meeting and General Conference we will be staying at the St. Louisian (Best Western) Hotel at 1133 Washington Ave.-Washington and Tucker. Room rates are for a single-\$30; two people-\$38; sharing with three persons; four person share at \$50. So if you were to share with three others it would be \$12.50 a night.

We are trying to do some fundraising to help with housing costs. We will do all we can to make the meeting and the conference affordable.

If you have housing questions call Roger at [REDACTED] or Steve at [REDACTED]



OPEN HANDS NEEDS WRITINGS

For an upcoming issue of Open Hands we are asking for poems, comments, graphics from people with AIDS and family/friends of PWA's. We are looking for moments related to living and living with AIDS. Please send any contributions to Mary Gaddis, [REDACTED] Holy City, CA

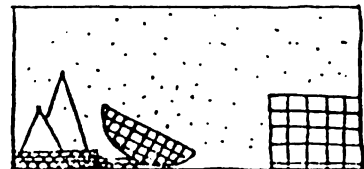
R.C.'S BOLD MOVE

A bold move to expand the Reconciling Congregation Program has been implemented as a result of a joint decision by AFFIRMATION'S Coordinating Committee and the Reconciling Congregation Program's Advisory Committee.

Meeting in Chicago for two days of intensive discussion about the program, its future direction, and its relationship to AFFIRMATION, the groups agreed to provide additional staff time and assistance to the program.

Mark Bowman, one of the original two co-coordinators of the program, has been employed on a half-time basis to work with the program. Among his duties will be providing resources for existing Reconciling Congregations, encouraging new congregations to participate in the program, and serving as the managing editor of Open Hands, the programs's journal.

Bowman began his new assignment February First and will continue through May 31 unless the general membership decides to continue the relationship when the issue is presented for discussion at the April meeting in St. Louis.



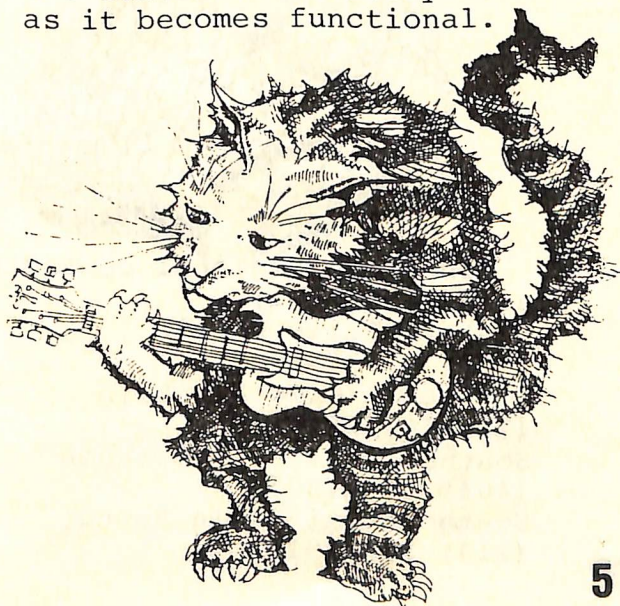
BOLD MOVE CONT

AFFIRMATION'S membership gave the Coordinating Committee the authority to employ staff on an interim basis if, in the committee's judgement, that was the most effective way to meet the growing demands of the program.

Under the terms of the plan, Bowman relates both to the AFFIRMATION Coordinating Committee and the Advisory Committee.

In addition to the decision to employ the coordinator, the two groups agreed to expand the Reconciling Congregation's Program's Advisory Committee from four to eight members immediately and to move in the direction of naming an editorial advisory board for the journal.

The two editors of Open Hands will continue in their positions working with Bowman as the managing editor and the editorial advisory board as it becomes functional.



In moving toward the decision to employ a half-time coordinator, the Coordinating Committee explored a number of different alternative plans. Those included relying on all volunteer workers in the program, employing a full-time coordinator, seeking two part-time coordinators, and changing the editorial responsibilities for the journal.

In addition to addressing the immediate management needs of the Reconciling Congregation Program, the Coordinating Committee and the Advisory Committee have developed several long-term alternatives which have been forwarded to AFFIRMATION'S Long-Range Planning Committee for evaluation and discussion.

JUSTICE SEEKERS

AFFIRMATION will host a dinner at the 1988 General Conference, on Wednesday April 27th. We will be celebrating United Methodist women justice seekers. Plan to attend and since it is early in the Conference be thinking of creative ways to get the word out.

If you have any suggestions of U.M. women who represent the depth and diversity of the justice seeking community please send them as soon as possible to Mary Gaddis, [redacted] Holy City, CA. [redacted] Include, name, address, phone number and short biography of all women suggested.

REGIONAL COORDINATORS MEET

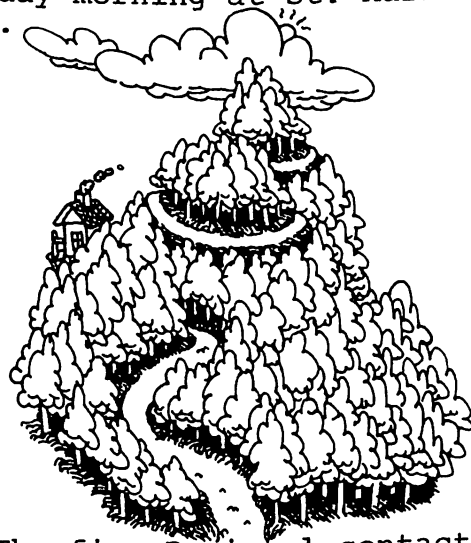
Over the weekend of February 19-21, five Regional Coordinators, one from each jurisdiction, two co-convenors of the Regional Organizing Program and two members of the AFFIRMATION Coordinating Committee met in Sacramento. This historic first meeting of the Regional Organizing Program Advisory Council began by defining the job description of each jurisdictional Regional Coordinator. Sensing a need for more help with the job each coordinator will enlist a gender parity person to serve as co-coordinator. These persons will serve as contacts for those wishing to start an Affirmation group, nurture local existing groups, and serve as a liaison between local groups and National AFFIRMATION.

The Council then streamlined resource material for responding to inquiries. A brochure on how to start an Affirmation group, a profile of an Affirmation group, a new Affirmation poster and a resource order form were developed.



Responding to a need for increased evangelism within the gay and lesbian community, the council set five long range goals ranging from increasing Affirmation memberships to organizing regularly functioning Affirmation groups in each Annual Conference. These goals will be reviewed by the membership at the AFFIRMATION Spring meeting in April.

Budgeting and suggestions to Long Range Planning Committee took up the remainder of the weekend. The hard work and productivity of the weekend was celebrated by attending worship services Sunday morning at St. Marks UMC.



The five Regional contacts are as follows;

Western-Ellie Norris

Northeast-Greg Franklin

Southeast-Richard Swanson

Southcentral-Edwin Young

LYLE LODER 1950-1987

Lyle R. Loder, a former member of the AFFIRMATION Coordinating Committee, died December 2, 1987, two days after his 37th birthday. He had been diagnosed with AIDS in September 1986.

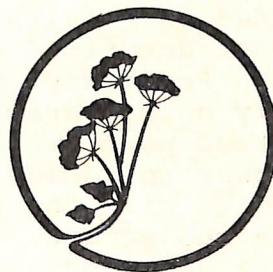
Lyle was the son of Ethyle and Paul Loder of Marquette, Kansas. He grew up in Western Kansas and in what was then the Methodist Church. Following his graduation from Kansas Wesleyan University, Lyle became a member of the US-2 short term missionary program and served in Camden, New Jersey. He remained with the project after completing his US-2 term until a move took him to southern California in 1980.

After moving to California, Lyle became active in AFFIRMATION and was among those responsible for the activation of a local group in the Los Angeles area. As one of a very small number of openly gay/lesbian persons in the California-Pacific Conference, Lyle was primarily responsible for passage of several important resolutions at the annual conference. Among these was a resolution that established a conference study on homophobia. Following the completion of the study, the conference passed legislation stating its opposition to discrimination on the basis of homophobia. The resolution

specifically included employment discrimination within the annual conference itself.

At the time of his death, Lyle was chair of the Administrative Council of Hollywood First United Methodist Church. He was a member of the Conference Board of Church and Society for several years.

For most of 1987, the National Consultation on AIDS Ministries was a principal focus for Lyle's energy and interest. He served on its planning committee and steering committee and was a member of a panel of persons discussing their personal experiences with AIDS. The report of the consultation, to be released in early 1988, will be dedicated "to the glory of God in gratitude for the life of Lyle R. Loder."



Lyle died as he had lived, gracefully, peacefully, and surrounded by his friends. Memorial services were held in December in Kansas and in Los Angeles. The AFFIRMATION Coordinating Committee will hold a Eucharist in Lyle's memory at its winter meeting, and a service is also being planned on the East Coast.

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LYLE CONT

Lyle's attitude toward life after learning of his AIDS diagnosis it expressed in these excerpts from "Learning from Living with AIDS," which he wrote for the June 1987 issue of New World Outlook.

"I experience grace when I awaken to another day; when the telephone rings and it is a friend calling to check on me; when someone slips a hand into mine; when I participate in the Eucharist and taste the bread and the juice; when I feel that thrill deep within me that all is well in God's world in spite of my illness. All are instances of grace, and I sense what it means to be accepted by God and to be made whole.

"I think that I am not afraid of death-at least I do not want to be. My hope is grounded in a faith stance best described by theologian Peggy Way, whom I recently heard paraphrased: The greatest power we have is the power to decide to whom we will give the power to define who we are.

"I have decided that that power will not be given over to AIDS or to death. It is reserved and given over to the God whom I serve, the God of the living, the God who calls me to life with quality and abundance until that moment when my life is surrendered with dignity and integrity to the peaceful and eternal embrace of God's love."

NOMINATING COMMITTEE PRESENTS SLATE

The AFFIRMATION 1988 nominating committee has completed its work and would like to share the slate that will be presented during the Spring meeting. The election will be held during the business meeting.

Two groups were named, the first for a two year term, the second group will serve for four years.

- Judy Cayot-Bay Area, CA
- Roger Kruse-Mesa, AZ
- Annette Oliver-Chicago, IL
- Maggie Roe-Washington, D.C.
- Tim Tyner-Dallas, TX

And those being nominated for a four year term:

- Gloria Soliz-Bay Area, CA
- Marcia Knight-Indianapolis, IN
- Andy Miller-Winston-Salem, NC
- Randy Miller-Washington, D.C.
- One gay man whose name cannot be used.

Those nominated for spokesperson are:

- Judy Cayot
- Randy Miller



N.G.L.T.F. ADVANCES

The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) the movement's pre-eminent national voice, has closed the books on a year of unprecedented activism and growth. In a year which saw the largest single political gathering of gay men and lesbians in history, the Task Force continued to advance protections and rights for gay and lesbian Americans. Headquartered in Washington D.C., NGLTF's full-time staff of ten won several major victories for gay and lesbian rights, initiated local organizing projects across the country, and positioned itself for an even stronger future.

In 1987, NGLTF continued to work aggressively at the federal level to protect the rights of gay men and lesbians and to influence the government to respond quickly and compassionately to the AIDS crisis.

The Task Force also lobbied forcefully against the confirmations of Supreme Court nominees Robert Bork and Anthony Kennedy, underscoring for the Senate the two men's insensitivity to privacy issues of concern to women, gay men and lesbians.

The Task Force also pushed its legislative efforts beyond Washington. Early in the year, NGLTF launched "The Privacy Project" to spearhead repeal of sodomy laws still on the statute books across the

country. NGLTF concentrated much of its effort on Maryland, where the last attempt at sodomy law repeal took place ten years ago.

To offer greater assistance to state and local organizations, the Task Force initiated the National State-Action Lobby last summer. This program will provide essential resources and energy to local activists working to repeal sodomy laws, to block repressive AIDS legislation, and to press for recognition of the lesbian/gay family.

Building on its fundraising success of 1987, NGLTF has recently approved a record 1.5 million budget for 1988, and the organization looks toward still greater activism on gay and lesbian issues.

Morris Floyd, one of AFFIRMATION's spokespersons, is a member of the NGLTF Board of Directors. "The changes we are seeking in the church need also to be reflected in and guaranteed by the society at large. NGLTF is one effective means of advancing that objective. I urge everyone in AFFIRMATION to consider becoming a member of the Task Force," said Morris. More information about NGLTF can be obtained from Morris or from NGLTF at 1517 U street, NW, Washington, DC 20009.



REGIONAL ORGANIZING



CHICAGO AFFIRMATION

The Chicago group meets monthly and members are active at area Reconciling Congregations: Wheadon, Evanston, Albany Park, Chicago, and University De Kalb. Contact the group: P.O. Box 1021, Evanston, IL 60204. or call Annette at [REDACTED], David at [REDACTED] or Michael at [REDACTED]

DALLAS/FORT WORTH AFFIRMATION

1987 ended with great sadness and joy for the Dallas/Fort Worth group as we offered up AFFIRMATION founder Gene Leggett to the Lord and gave thanks for the gift of his life. With joy we celebrated Christ's birth with a fabulous party, learned more about the church in the Soviet Union (including hearing "How Great Thou Art" in Estonian) at the November meeting and in January heard Glen Maxey of the Lesbian Gay Rights Lobby to the Texas Legislature. Food collection for the AIDS Resource Center continues at each meeting along with weekly Bible study and the United Methodist Men's Chorus. Contact: [REDACTED] Dallas, TX [REDACTED] or call [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]

FAIRBANKS AFFIRMATION

Our group in the Alaska Missionary Conference meets monthly and enjoys a mixture of gay/lesbian and non gay persons. Contact the group c/o Patti Unruh, [REDACTED] Fairbanks, AL [REDACTED]

TOPEKA AFFIRMATION

Twenty-one persons met in January for the first meeting of the Topeka group! Kansas is a fertile field for lesbian/gay mission work for Affirmation so keep the Topeka faithful in your prayers. Contact can be made through the Kansas City Group at [REDACTED] Kansas City, MO [REDACTED].

PHILADELPHIA AREA AFFIRMATION

A Philadelphia Reconciling Congregation, Calvary UMC, proclaims the inclusive gospel of Jesus Christ.

NASHVILLE AFFIRMATION

The Nashville group meets on the fourth Wednesday of each month for spiritual growth, outreach, and mutual support. Meetings center around a topical discussion and a time of devotion and worship. Contact: [REDACTED], Nashville, TN [REDACTED] or call [REDACTED].

OKLAHOMA AFFIRMATION

Weekly meetings with program topics of interest to the gay and lesbian community, potluck dinners, Bible study and the "A-OK's," the groups highly ranked bowling team in the Lambda League provide ample opportunities for fellowship, spiritual growth and outreach for the Oklahoma City Group. Meeting at Clegg Memorial UMC, the group can be contacted at

██████████, Oklahoma City, OK ██████████ or call ██████████

MINNESOTA AFFIRMATION

Minnesota Affirmation and Wesley UMC, Minneapolis have grown together and merged through the power of the Holy Spirit into one whole body. This wholeness is a goal which Affirmation seeks in each congregation, conference and indeed for the whole United Methodist Church. Affirmation still functions as a voice within Wesley UMC and the Minnesota Conference as a voice for openness, acceptance and the love of all persons as seen in a recent dialogue of persons from Wesley and Affirmation with Bishop Colaw. Wesley and Minnesota Affirmation issues an invitation to all to join in the fellowship. Wesley UMC--██████████.



AFFIRMATION METRO-ST. LOUIS

The St. Louis group meets on the first Sunday at 6:00 p.m. at Shaw UMC for a potluck dinner, business meeting and prayer meeting. On the third Sunday the meeting begins at 6:00 at Shaw UMC with business and then communion. The group then adjourns to a member's home for discussion and fellowship. The group will again host the National Affirmation Meeting in April. For information: ██████████

██████████, St. Louis, MO ██████████ or call ██████████ or ██████████.



AFFIRMATION SEATTLE

Affirmation/Seattle celebrated its third anniversary with the Fourth Annual Advent Service of Reconciliation on December 6th at Wallingford UMC. The group held its annual MLK weekend retreat at Camp Indianola featuring the theme "Community Building." Potluck and business meetings on alternating Mondays and Thursdays keep the group in touch with each other and with its mission. Contact the group: ██████████

██████████ Seattle, WA ██████████ or call ██████████ afternoons, ██████████ evenings.

CONT

REGIONAL ORGANIZING



BAY AREA AFFIRMATION

Meeting monthly the Bay Area group meets either in San Francisco or the East Bay. In January we had our annual Christmas Party/Tacky gift exchange. For more information call Ellie Norris at [REDACTED].

SACRAMENTO AFFIRMATION

Meeting monthly, the group explores ways to reach out to its church and lesbian/gay community. It will host the meeting of the Regional Organizing Program Advisory Council as it visions for the growth of AFFIRMATION in February. Call: [REDACTED] or [REDACTED].

PHOENIX AFFIRMATION

The nucleus of a group is being brought together in Phoenix. Meeting on an irregular basis at present, the group hopes to draw others into God's love and the fellowship of supportive Christians. Contact: [REDACTED] Mesa, AZ [REDACTED].

DENVER AREA AFFIRMATION

St. Paul's UMC, in Denver ministers to the gay and lesbian community and Affirmation folk find an open hand there.



FRESNO AREA AFFIRMATION

Wesley UMC, Fresno, a Reconciling Congregation welcomes all who would proclaim Jesus as Lord and work for the coming reign of God on earth.

LOS ANGELES AFFIRMATION

1st UMC, Hollywood was the place, January 5th the date on which faithful gay, lesbian and other supportive United Methodist Christians celebrated six years of witness to the church and gay/lesbian community. A Christmas party, monthly meetings, and the Lyle Loder Memorial Service were other events of the winter season. Contact: [REDACTED] Hollywood, CA [REDACTED].

OREGON-IDAHO AFFIRMATION

The Portland fellowship continues to meet monthly with a potluck meal and programs ranging from AIDS Ministry issues to gay/lesbian music to Holy Communion. General Conference delegates received the AFFIRMATION Platform Statement, which in itself is a powerful witness. The group invites participation: [REDACTED], Portland, OR [REDACTED] or call [REDACTED].



YELLOWSTONE AFFIRMATION

February 18-19, the Yellowstone Affirmation Connection will meet at a Bozeman UMC with the Yellowstone Church and Society Committee to set the date of the Connection's spring meeting and to view a slide show of the March on Washington. Petitions for Annual Conference will also be discussed. Contact the Connection through: Ron Lang [REDACTED], Bozeman, MT [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]

MID-ATLANTIC AFFIRMATION

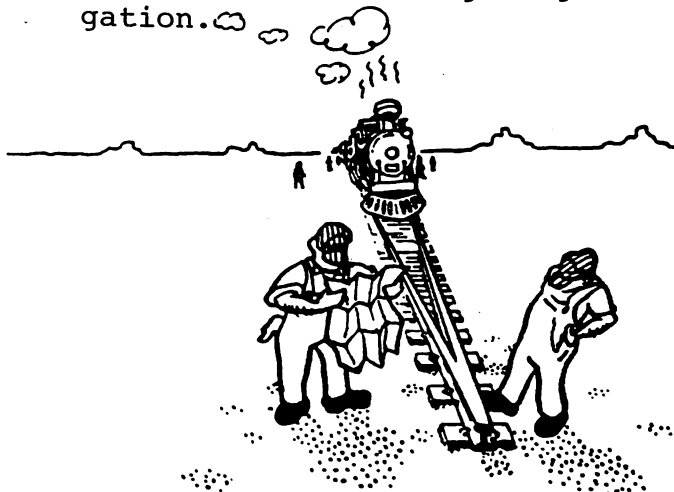
A very special worship service addressing the AIDS crisis was held in the Oxnam Chapel of Wesley Theological Seminary with leadership by the Baltimore Conference Clergywomen's Choir. The Over 40's group's Christmas gathering and the AIDS Food Drive sponsored by Foundry UMC's AIDS Mission Group were smashing successes. The group invites all to weekly worship at Dunbarton UMC and to join the Neighborhood Bible Study. Join in: [REDACTED] Washington D.C. [REDACTED] or call [REDACTED].

NEBRASKA AFFIRMATION

A special Christmas dinner and monthly meetings which alternate between Omaha and Lincoln keep the Cornhuskers involved in community building, witness and spiritual growth. For information: [REDACTED], Lincoln, NE [REDACTED] or call [REDACTED].

BALTIMORE AREA AFFIRMATION

St. John's UMC, Baltimore provides opportunities for service and outreach in its work as a Reconciling Congregation. ☁ ☁ ☁



NORTHWEST OHIO AFFIRMATION

God's reconciliation through Jesus Christ is evident in the inclusive life of the congregation of Central UMC, Toledo.

KANSAS CITY AFFIRMATION

Every second Thursday finds gay and lesbian United Methodists and their friends in the Kansas City area meeting for fellowship and worship. Fifth Sundays provide times for social get togethers. Join in: [REDACTED], Kansas City, MO [REDACTED].

NEW ORLEANS AREA AFFIRMATION

Often times a voice crying in the wilderness, St. Mark's UMC in the French Quarter calls for justice and reconciliation in the Louisiana Conference and the New Orleans gay and lesbian community.

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REGIONAL ORGANIZING



WESTERN NEW YORK AFFIRMATION

The group meets every first Sunday afternoon and every third Thursday evening at Ontario Street UMC, Buffalo for worship, fellowship and group awareness of its mission to the Church and to the lesbian/gay community.

Contact: [REDACTED]
Hamburg, NY [REDACTED] or call [REDACTED]

NEW YORK CITY AFFIRMATION

Gay and lesbian United Methodists can find supportive church homes at Washington Square UMC in the Village and at Park Slope UMC, Brooklyn, both Reconciling Congregations.

MADISON AFFIRMATION

December's meetings brought the group a program of love poetry and an evening of hot cider and Christmas carols. The Wisconsin Conference Board of Church and Society sponsored a retreat at Camp Byron entitled "Pilgrims in a Foreign Land," dealing with the difficulties and joys of being both lesbian/gay and Christian which many of the group attended. Pray for the possibility of a new Reconciling Congregation in Sheboygan. Join in: Affirmation c/o University UMC, 1127 University Ave. Madison, WI 53715 or call [REDACTED].

INDIANAPOLIS AFFIRMATION

The group in Hoosierland looked back to one year ago on January 21st when four person gathered at North UMC as Affirmation to present their proposal to the church's Administrative Board to be part of the church's ministry. Since then the group has grown to over forty persons and meets twice monthly for support and outreach to the church and gay and lesbian community. The New Year's Eve party proved a grand way to kick off the new year. The group is invitational:

[REDACTED] Indianapolis,
IN [REDACTED] or call [REDACTED].



AUSTIN AFFIRMATION

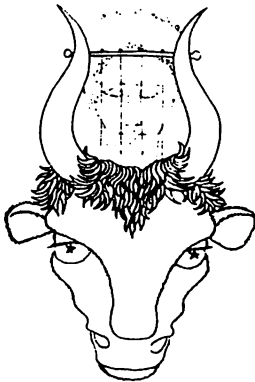
God's many gifts were celebrated at a worship service at University UMC and afterwards with a potluck meal on Thanksgiving Day. A dialogue of four Affirmation members and several Austin area UMC clergy proved exciting and supportive. The group celebrated Christmas with The Lord's Supper and looks forward to the new year with a new leadership format.

Join in: [REDACTED]
Austin, TX [REDACTED] or call [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] con't next page

TEE-SHIRT AVAILABLE

TUCSON AFFIRMATION

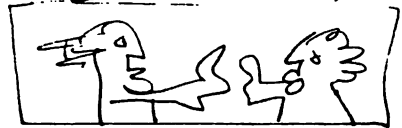
As part of its Reconciling Congregation process, gay and lesbian members, their family, and friends of the Church of St. Francis in the Foothills UMC, voted on December 17, 1987 to become an Affirmation group. The group informally began meeting in July as a preparatory steps toward developing a Reconciling Congregation statement and program for the church community. Outreach to our gay members is being met by biweekly support group meetings. Future activities include a social activities committee, group sessions facilitated by a psychologist on "Exploring our Sexuality?Identity", and health, social, and spiritual resource access. Write to Church of St. Francis in the Foothills, 4625 East River Road, Tucson, AZ, 85718 or call Carol at [REDACTED].



AFFIRMATION IN ATLANTA AREA

Affirmation folk are found at Grant Park-Aldersgate UMC, Atlanta, a Reconciling Congregation.

I am proud to announce the arrival of the latest in fashion history! We, the Dallas chapter, in an effort to spear-head the drive for AFFIRMATION at the 1988 General Conference, are offering the AFFIRMATION T-shirt. These shirts are being sold to Affirmation groups around the country, so it is a pleasure to consider this sort of a national "uniform"! You will probably see lots of folks wearing these at General Conference and other events in 1988! Cost per shirt is a donation of only \$10. There is no charge for tax or shipping.



All proceeds will be used to help fund Affirmation's appearance at General Conference in St. Louis this Spring. They are made of 100% cotton, preshrunk, and available in small, medium, large, and x-large, with an attractive design including the AFFIRMATION symbol and the word "AFFIRMATION" printed on the left chest. Wear it with love and pride. I look forward to hearing from you! Gary Walker, (send order to) [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Dallas, TX [REDACTED]. P.S. Please make checks payable to AFFIRMATION. Please do not send cash. Allow 3-4 weeks for delivery.

GENE LEGGETT 1935-1987

On December 31, 1987, one of the founding members of the United Methodist Gay Caucus, the group which later evolved into AFFIRMATION, died at Medical City Hospital in Dallas, Texas, of complications arising from chronic hepatitis. Franklin Gene Leggett was fifty-two years old.

I first met Gene (he disliked the name Franklin, and never used it) in the fall of 1970. He was an actor and teacher at the Dallas Theater Center, and I was a student in the Center's professional academy. I was surprised when I learned that this attractive, flamboyant man in long hair and hippie attire was a Methodist minister. I could tell he was gay, and I came to learn that he lived by faith. I had not been able to reconcile those two elements in my own life, and marvelled at one who seemed to combine the two so easily. That seeming ease was deceptive, the result of an intense personal struggle. Having fought that struggle—having reconciled his faith and his sexuality—he shared that reconciliation unstintingly with those around him. In my own life Gene Leggett was again and again the instrument of God's grace in helping me to achieve that same reconciliation.

Gene was born March 19, in Edinburg, Texas, in the Rio Grande Valley. He grew up in the church, and seemed to his family and friends to be destined for the ministry. He graduated from Pan American University in the valley, married his childhood sweetheart, Fanny, and began studies at Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University. There he discovered the t-rooms. When he talked about those days he would speak of the excitement of it, and joke about spending his seminary days on his knees one way or another, but this was also when he began the struggle to understand his sexuality in light of his faith.

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GENE CONT

Shortly before he graduated from Perkins, Gene decided to speak with his favorite professor, whom he revered and emulated, about his sexuality. The professor listened thoughtfully, and then told Gene that he, too, had known for some time that he was gay. He had decided that his best course was not to act on his gay feelings, and advised Gene to follow the same course.

After graduation, Gene briefly attended Union Theological Seminary in New York while serving a small church in New Jersey. He did not complete his studies at Union, moving with his family (there were now three boys-John, Steven and Mark) back to Texas to take up the life of an itinerant Methodist minister in the Southwest Texas Conference. He served churches in San Antonio, the small town of Dilly, and Austin. All during this period he led a double life. Later on he would speak jokingly of staying out late to trick on Saturday nights and then fighting to keep awake in the pulpit on Sunday mornings. Only rarely would he speak of the steadily growing burden of guilt as he tried to maintain a family life and a minister's career while living a gay life on the sly.



Eventually, inevitably, he was found out. A member of the congregation of University UMC in Austin, suspecting the truth, hired a private detective to follow Gene. He was called into the church office, confronted with the results of the investigation, and offered a deal. If he would resign his position and seek a non-preaching appointment outside the conference, they would drop the matter and not seek church prosecution. Feeling that this would be best for his family, and not yet ready to be the openly gay spokesperson he later became, Gene accepted the deal. In 1965 he and his family moved to Dallas, where Gene started graduate studies in theater at the Dallas Theater Center.

During this period Gene and Fanny decided to divorce. Gene never spoke about it, but I know the divorce was very difficult for him. He and Fanny had been close since childhood, and remained close even after she subsequently remarried and moved with the boys back down to the Rio Grande Valley. Separation from his sons was also hard on Gene, but he seldom if ever complained, about this or anything else.

cont next page

GENE CONT

In early 1971, shortly after I met him, a minister friend of Gene's was put on church trail for immoral conduct and asked Gene to testify as a character witness at the trial. In his testimony Gene contrasted the handling of this case with the way his own case had been handled. He had not been brought to trial even though everyone knew he was gay. That statement stirred the hornet's nest. The hard-core homophobes within the Southwest Texas Conference buzzed and swarmed with plans to strip Gene of his credentials at the next annual conference.

The 1971 Southwest Texas Annual Conference was held at the Travis Park UMC in San Antonio. The full story of what took place would require a entire article, but someone else will have to write it as I was unable to be there. A number of post-Stonewall street-drag protesters were present, the mere sight of which traumatized delegates right and left. In the end, Gene was put on "involuntary location", effectively taking away his right to act as a minister within the United Methodist Church. One of his favorite stories from that conference was how, as he left the sanctuary after the vote had gone against him, a cleaning lady in the lobby told him "Don't worry honey, the Lord gave you credentials they can't even touch."

The publicity generated by all this made Gene a gay spokesperson, whether or not he desired it or felt ready for it. Typically, he regarded it as a gift, a chance for service, rather than as a burden to be borne. He had moved, along with myself and several others, into a large house on Gilbert street in Dallas. We decided to incorporate as a church, and chose the name "House of the Covenant". We operated very loosely as an unstructured open space for young gay people who had no other place to go to be themselves without hassle or intimidation. About this time Life magazine devoted one issue to the growing Gay Liberation movement, and photographed Gene outside of the house in his long hair and beard, wearing jeans and lots of ecclesiastical jewelry, carrying a six-foot tall shepherd's crook. Soon we were getting calls from all over the south central United States from gay people who were immensely relieved to know they were not alone, and overjoyed to have someone to talk with who understood.



GENE CONT

This only brings us to the fall of 1971. Still to come in Gene's life were the Atlanta General Conference of 1972, the beginnings of the United Methodist Gay Caucus (later AFFIRMATION), the Portland, Oregon, General Conference of 1976, Gene's ministry in San Antonio to the young gay street hustlers (who referred to him in Spanish as "the old queer"), and many other stories for which there is neither time nor space now. Someday a book will have to be written, and I would greatly appreciate hearing from anyone who would like to write down their won reminiscences of Gene.

Gene spent the last five years as General Manager of TITAS, a non-profit cultural arts organization in Dallas. He has been an active and visible member of Oak Lawn UMC, and been very active in the Dallas-area chapter of Affirmation. He was looked to as a leader, especially in matters of theology and in group worship. He helped to found a men's chorus as an outreach to both gays and straights. He never ceased to look for ways to bring gays to the church, and the church to gays. His death has left a void in our community that will not easily or soon be filled.



Dallas Affirmation has started a Gene Leggett Memorial Speakers Fund, and has also requested that people around the country who wish to remember Gene would give a donation in his name to the National Affirmation Memorial Fund at P.O. Box 1021, Evanston, IL 60204. That, and a re-dedication on all our parts to the goals and principles of AFFIRMATION would be fitting ways for us to give thanks to God for the life of Gene Leggett.

Peter Madison

Dallas, TX

COORDINATING COMMITTEE

Judy Cayot
[REDACTED]

Albany, CA [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Mary Gaddis
[REDACTED]

Holy City, CA [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Roger Kruse
[REDACTED]

Mesa, AZ [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Annette Oliver
[REDACTED]

Chicago, IL [REDACTED]

D.J. Porter
[REDACTED]

New Hope, PA [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Maggie Roe
[REDACTED]

Lincoln, NE [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Brad Rymph
[REDACTED]

Washington, DC [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Tim Tyner
[REDACTED]

Dallas, TX [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

COORDINATING COMMITTEE

Mike Underhill
[REDACTED]

Chicago, IL [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

And one lesbian whose name
cannot be used.

AFFIRMATION SPOKESPERSONS

Morris Floyd
[REDACTED]

Minneapolis, MN [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Mary Gaddis
[REDACTED]

Holy City, CA [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]



REGISTRATION
SEMI-ANNUAL NATIONAL MEETING
OF AFFIRMATION
APRIL 22-24, ST. LOUIS
(Please send in this form as soon as possible)

NAME _____ Home Phone (opt) _____
ADDRESS _____ Work Phone (opt) _____
_____ Zip Code _____

Please include registration and hotel expense payable to
'NATIONAL AFFIRMATION'

I Registration fee-

\$10.00 Student/Fixed Income/Subsistence Income
\$30.00 Up to \$15,000 Annual Income
\$45.00 \$15,000 to \$30,000 Annual Income
\$60.00 \$30,000 to \$50,000 Annual Income
\$75.00 \$50,000 and Up Annual Income

II Room rates

Single \$30.00 per night
Two persons \$19.00 per night
Three persons \$14.70 per night
Four persons \$12.50 per night

_____ Enclosed is my registration and hotel expense.

_____ I am coming to St. Louis and will send my
registration and hotel expense in by April 12.

_____ I cannot come but I am enclosing a contribution.

I prefer smoking _____

I prefer non smoking _____

Doesn't matter _____

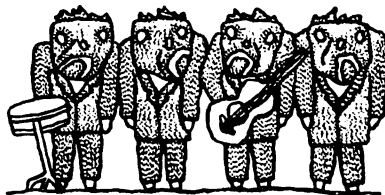
I plan to arrive on _____ (date and time)

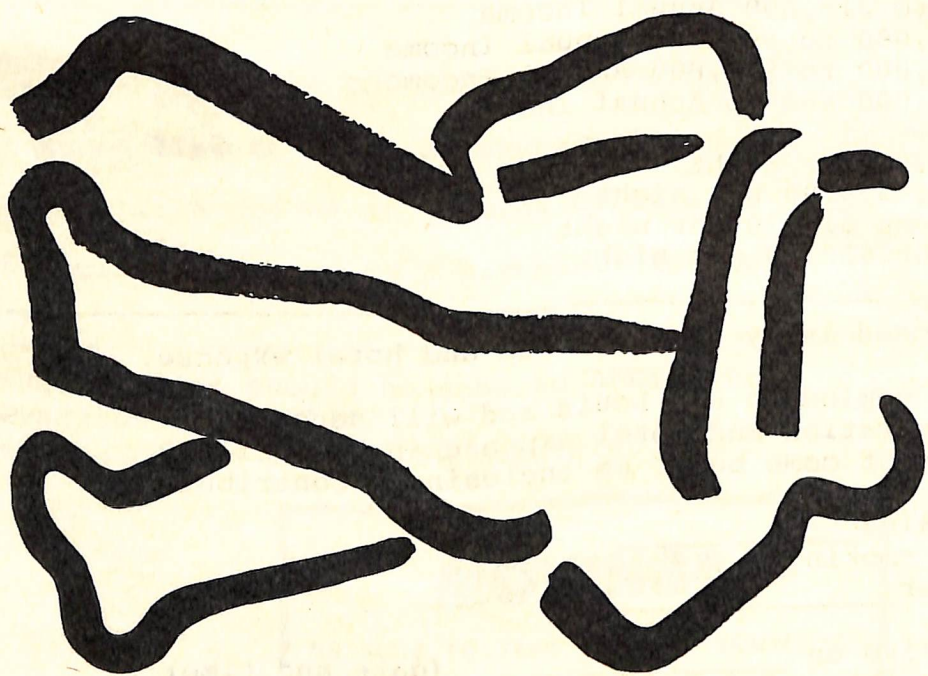
I will be staying _____ (nights at hotel)

Please list airline and flight number _____

Registration should be sent to AFFIRMATION, P.O. BOX 1021,
Evanston, IL, 60204

Please return as soon as possible.





This questionnaire is part of preparing the Open Hands summer 1989 issue which is about "Closets." We appreciate your help, whether you are in one or not!
Return to: Portland Affirmation, P.O. Box 12673, Portland, OR 97212.

Please fill in the blanks or circle the appropriate answer.

- (1) AGE: _____ (2) GENDER: Female Male
- (3) ETHNICITY: White Asian Black Hispanic Native American
- (4) Number of years gay-identified (to yourself): _____
- (5) I live in: an URBAN area a SMALL TOWN/RURAL area
- (6) I live in the: Northeast Southeast North Central U.S.
South Central U.S. Western U.S. Outside the U.S.
- (7) I am: United Methodist member of other mainline
neither of above Protestant denomination

(8) Are you out to:	yes	no	yes, selectively
parents _____			
other immediate family _____			
co-workers _____			
pastor _____			
church members _____			
friends _____			

(9) What factors have brought you out?

(10) What factors keep/kept you in the closet?

(11) If you have come out to parents, children or other family members, how did it go?

RESPOND either to #12 or #13 (two questions each) as appropriate to you:

(12) What freedom do you experience as a "closeted" person?

What restrictions do you experience as a "closeted" person?

(13) What freedom do you experience as an "out" person?

What restrictions do you experience as an "out" person?

(14) Do you have any comments about the connections between your "outness" or "closetedness" and your faith/spiritual life?

THANK YOU!!!!

Your name: (optional) _____